

Watson Predicts Major Increase in Tax Rates

County Assessor Phil Watson has warned that if expenditures and growth continue at present rates, homeowners face the prospect of a \$22 property tax rate in just 15 years.

Unless an overall limit on property taxes is enacted, he said, taxes could wipe out the average family's ability to own a home.

Addressing the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco on the topic, "Assessments—Where Do We Go Now?" Watson pointed out that property taxes will be called on to raise \$13.5 billion in 1980, up about four times from present collections, if the trend of the next 15 years follows that of the last 15.

THIS WOULD MEAN, he said, that a homeowner with a 35-year mortgage, who at current rates pays for his house in taxes in the same amount of time it takes to pay off his mortgage, would

have to pay for his house twice-over in taxes at 1980 rates.

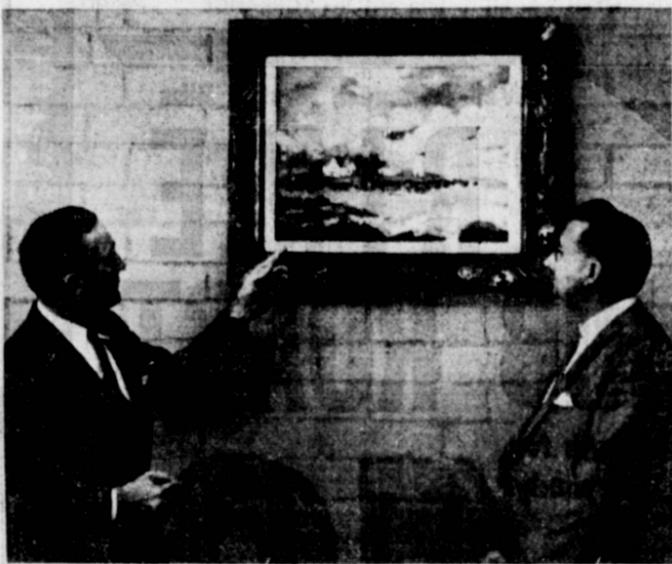
Reviewing the history of the property tax, which dates as far back as ancient Egypt, and has been with us since, Watson said it is a logical tax for local government purposes, but it is now being called on to support too many services for which it was not intended.

He listed as its principal defects: difficulty of paying in lump sum; since it is rising faster than the combined cost of living, income and population growth, it is taking a greater share of personal income every year; it can vary from year to year if either the rate or the assessment changes; with so many agencies taxing property, the taxpayer can't fix responsibility for the tax and loopholes in the law which can permit bad assessment practice.

WATSON CALLED for legislation to fix a uniform assessment ratio, provide for adequate notification of assessment changes, and set up assessment appeal boards for fairer equalization. Such reforms, he said, would give the taxpayer better assurance that he was being taxed fairly and some recourse if he weren't.

He also called for an end to piecemeal reassessing, which allows government to play the "tax rate game," financing an annual budget increase through a dependable annual increase in assessments while "holding the line on the tax rate."

He also condemned the use of exemptions to grant tax relief to certain classes of people or types of property at the expense of the remaining taxpayers who must then pay someone else's tax bill as well as his own.



ART EXHIBIT . . . Lucien M. Biggs, right) manager of the newly opened Hermosa Beach branch of Centinela Valley Bank, and Robert Fagenstrom, president of the South Bay Art Association, examine one of the paintings which will be included in an exhibit of work by association members at the bank. Works by Beth Leffler, Ellen Roberts, Sallie Limer, Peggy Stuart, Lanny Pringle, Mildred Smith, Mary Dick, and Dorothy Harvey will be shown at the bank, 1103 Pier Ave. on a revolving basis.



AGENCY CITED . . . Official of Ray Vane Chrysler-Plymouth receive Customer Care Award from A. D. Mentzer (left), Chrysler district manager. Others (from left) are C. E. Bradley, owner relations manager; Jack Harris, vice president and general manager of the agency; Bill Scanlon, service manager; and Vane. The award cites the firm's record for "continued good customer care."

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MERCEDES BENZ FRICTION CAR	Suggested Retail 1.00	SALE .44	MATTEL SKIPPER DOLL	Suggested Retail 3.00	SALE 1.57
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FUR MONKEY	Suggested Retail 12.00	SALE 5.99	IDEAL FISH BAIT GAME	Suggested Retail 5.00	SALE 2.88
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